

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /057 W

----- 025264

R 082150Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8294

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 0216

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJECT: ANTI-SIL CAMPAIGN AND THE CHURCH

1. PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS (SIL) CONTINUES AS FEBRUARY 1976 SIL CONTRACT RENEWAL DATE APPROACHES. LEFTIST WEEKLY MUNDIAL (ASSOCIATED WITH DAILY EXPRESO), IN DECEMBER 29 ARTICLE ATTACKING SIL, CLAIMED THAT THE GOP INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMISSION CHARGED WITH EVALUATING SIL QUESTION WILL RECOMMEND SIL BE EXPELLED FROM PERU. ONLY COUNTER-POINT TO ANTI-SIL COVERAGE WAS LENGTHY ARTICLE OF FULSOME PRAISE PUBLISHED IN RECENT ISSUE OF GENTE MAGAZINE.

2. ANTI-SIL CAMPAIGN HAS PRODUCED SOME REACTION WHICH COULD BENEFIT SIL. LIMA BISHOP BAMBAREN HAS FLATLY STATED THAT NEWSPAPERS DELIBERATELY MISQUOTED HIM AS CRITICAL OF SIL. HE SENT A PASTORAL LETTER TO LIMA PARISHES STATING THAT THERE IS "AN ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN AGAINST (SIL), AN INSTITUTION WHICH I CANNOT JUDGE FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE". BISHOP CALLED ON PRIESTS TO BE ALERT IN THE FACE OF "CLEAR INTENT (OF PRESS) TO GIVE POLITICAL TONE EVEN TO RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY". BAMBAREN HAS TOLD EMBASSY ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS THAT HE FEELS ANTI-SIL CAMPAIGN WILL BE FOLLOWED BY COORDINATED POLITICAL ATTACK ON FOREIGN PRIESTS AND ULTIMATELY THE CHURCH.

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3. IN LATE DECEMBER EMBASSY ARRANGED MEETING BETWEEN

BAMBAREN AND SIL OFFICIALS. BISHOP EXPRESSED "MORTIFICATION" AT ANTI-SIL COMMENTS FALSELY ATTRIBUTED TO HIM. HE SAID HE HAD INFORMED CERTAIN GOP MINISTERS OF MALICIOUS PRESS TREATMENT IN HOPE THAT RECORD WOULD BE SET STRAIGHT AND JORNALISTS PROPERLY CHASTISED (BISHOP FELT THIS WAS UNLIKELY, HOWEVER). BAMBAREN NOTED THAT BISHOPS, INCLUDING EIGHT FROM JUNGLE AREAS WHERE SIL IS OPERATING, WOULD BE MEETING IN LIMA IN JANUARY AT WHICH TIME SIL SITUATION WOULD BE DISCUSSED. HE INVITED SIL OFFICIALS TO MEET WITH THE BISHOPS IN ORDER TO ELABORATE ON SIL ACTIVITIES. FOL-LOWING BISHOPS' CONFERENCE THE CHURCH WOULD PROBABLY EXPRESS ITSELF ON THE MATTER, ADVISING GOP OF ITS CONCLUSIONS.

4. SIL OFFICIALS EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH BISHOPS. OFFICIALS LATER PROFUSELY THANKED EMBASSY FOR ARRANGING MEETING WITH BAMBAREN WHOM THEY FELT MIGHT NOW SUPPORT THEIR CAUSE.

5. COMMENT: BAMBAREN IS DEEPLY CONCERNED BY PRESS CAMPAIGN IN WHICH HE BECAME INVOLVED, AND HE JUST MIGHT BECOME AN ALLY IN QUIET SIL EFFORT TO MAINTAIN ITS PERUVIAN PROGRAM. IF LEFTIST EFFORT TO ELIMINATE SIL "IMPERIALIST PRESENCE" FAILS, IT MAY BE BECAUSE LEFT MISTAKENLY THOUGHT THAT "BISHOP OF THE PUEBLOS JOVENES" COULD BE USED TO FURTHER ITS CAUSE.
DEAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ALLEGATIONS, CHURCH SCHOOLS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LIMA00216
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760007-0729
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760176/aaaacpru.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 JUL 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <25 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ANTI-SIL CAMPAIGN AND THE CHURCH
TAGS: PINT, PE, SIL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006